GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6364
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2000
AUDIT OBSERVATIONS
PRABHUNATH SINGH

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of audit observations and the money involved therein are increasing year after year and observations relating to period commencing from 1979-80 and thereafter have not been cleared so far;

(b) if so, whether any time-limit has been fixed for the settlement of audit objections and appropriate action taken to fix responsibility in case of defaults;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Public Accounts Committee had also expressed serious concern overthe matter and desired it to be informed of the precise progress made in wiping out the outstanding audit observations;

(e) if so, whether the Committee has been apprised of the progress made in the matter; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS

(SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR)

(a) The process of audit observations is a continuous one. The number of observations raised and the money involved therein vary from year to year. However, the total number of audit observations raised upto 1997-98 and remaining unsettled at the end of May/June 1999 in respect of the Departments of Post and Telecom. were 10,422. This is lower than the corresponding figures for the preceding few years. Some of the outstanding observations relate to the period commencing from 1979-80 also. The total amount under these observations has gone up on account of manifold expansion in departmental activities and corresponding increase in financial transactions. The amount was however less than one percent of total expenditure of the departments during 1997-98.

(b)&(c): Yes Sir. Audit observations are required to be replied within stipulated time limits by concerned unit officers and the heads of units are required to take action including fixation of responsibility, where called for.

(d) to (f): In respect of the Department of Post, the Public Accounts Committee in its 5th Report (12th Lok Sabha) had desired that besides obtaining a quarterly statement showing Circle-wise pendency of audit objections, the Department should also take concrete steps to avoid any accumulation in future. Action Taken Note in this regard was submitted in August 1999, wherein progress made in settlement of objections was also indicated. In respect of the Department of Telecom, the Committee in Para 35 of their 2nd Report (12th Lok Sabha) had expressed its serious concern over the pendency and desired that DOT should issue suitable instructions to their officers and take urgent and effective steps under a time bound programme to wipe out outstanding audit observations and apprise the Committee of the progress made in this direction. In compliance, targets were fixed by the Department of Telecom for clearance of Audit Inspection Reports and objections, and instructions issued for fixation ofresponsibility in case oif defaults. An Action Taken Note on para 35, ibid; was also submitted to the Committee in May 1999, duly vetted by Audit.